

Guest Editorial

Agro-food systems, at the center of relevant changes with important economic, social and environmental implications, have to face also the changes taking place in the consumer behavior. In fact, demand for agricultural and food products has substantially changed, becoming more and more complex, resulting from 'aware and conscientious' consumption patterns. More attention is paid to attributes adding value to food - food quality and safety, place of origin, respect for the environment and ethical and social standards, food waste reduction, etc. - as well as to the consequences on the social and the environmental effects of agro-food production activities.

In this context, as guest editors we aimed at achieving an issue of the *Italian Review of Agricultural Economics (REA)* that could bring to a specific focus on recent 'Consumption and nutrition dynamics', thus focusing our attention on papers relating to the behavior of consumers, their preferences and attitudes, their purchase intentions or willingness to pay, in respect to quality and value-adding attributes of agro-food products.

The five papers published on this issue aim at drawing attention to some of these aspects although representing just a narrow view of the consumption key themes covered by the recent research on agricultural and food economics. More specifically, this issue is based on a selection of four papers covering different aspects of the behavior of consumers among those originally presented during the 52nd SIDEA Annual Conference held in Rome and Viterbo on *The value of food: internationalization, competition and local development in agro-food systems*, and on an article dealing with consumer preferences, whose Authors come from the University of Göttingen.

In detail, the paper by Ivana Bassi, Federico Nassivera and Lucia Piani aims at investigating consumers' attitudes towards food produced by social farms, as well as the casual relationships between this construct and those related to social and health consciousness. For this purpose the Authors adopted a two-stage analysis through a structural equation model, calculated with the linear structural relationship (LISREL) method. The study has been carried out on a convenience sample in the province of Pordenone. As pointed out by the Authors, this is a limitation to overtake in a future research. Results confirm the reliability of the three constructs on the variables taken into account and support the hypotheses of the proposed model.

The article by Maria Rosa Fanelli and Antonia Di Florio explores the causes of food waste in the phase of domestic consumption and the actions put in place

by consumers to reduce or prevent it. For this purpose the Authors have carried out a survey, through an online questionnaire, on a representative sample of 500 individuals, most of whom resident in Molise region. Questionnaire data had been analysed using simple correspondences, a cluster analysis and causal maps. The causes of food waste are obviously several and depend on socio-economic status and culture of consumers. Among these, expired food is the major root cause of domestic food waste. Also in this case the Authors acknowledge some limitations of the research, connected to the limited sample of consumers.

Another paper focuses on local products and investigates consumer motivations for purchasing cold cuts and, in particular, Capicollo Azze Anca Grecanico, a Slow Food Presidium in Calabria. In order to explore consumption behavior relative to local cold cuts, the Authors Agata Nicolosi, Pietro Pulina and Valentina Rosa Laganà have carried out a survey in some stores located in Calabria. A Multiple Correspondence Analysis was used to identify consumer's motivational profiles. A Logit regression was also utilized to evaluate the relationships between individual motivations and socio-demographic characteristics of consumers who purchase local cold cuts and Capicollo. The research highlights that consumers show a high propensity to the link between territory and product quality and confer a great importance to food security.

The fourth paper presented during the 52nd SIDEA Conference deals with ethical and sustainable consumption in the Italian coffee market and consumers' willingness-to-pay a premium price for ethical attributes. With the aim of investigating the attitudes towards organic and Fair Trade coffee among a sample of Italian consumers, the Authors Gianluigi Gallenti, Stefania Troiano, Marta Cosmina, and Francesco Marangon used a choice experiment method, with data obtained from a field experiment through face-to-face interviews at some points of sale. Data had been analysed using a RPL model. As main results, the paper shows high heterogeneity among respondents, most of whom seemed to be more interested in organic attributes than Fair Trade coffee.

Finally, the last contribute within this special issue regards 'Consumer Preferences for US Beef Products: a Meta-Analysis' by Xiaohua Yu, Zhifeng Gao and Satoru Shimokawa. The Authors aim at finding out the differences existing across countries in consumer preferences for US beef products with reference to current mandatory Country-of-Origin-Labeling (COOL) compliance. They conduct a meta-analysis to study consumer willingness-to-pay for US beef products collecting 57 observations from 20 primary studies. The paper analyses the heterogeneities within the observations from the point of view of facts and methodologies. As results the Authors find that consumers usually prefer their domestic beef products due to patriotism, and that Asian and European consumers are willing to pay importantly lower prices for US beef products than their domestic ones.

As guest editors, we think that this issue holds an internal coherence about some of the key themes in the recent research in agricultural and food consumption. We believe that these papers reflect the main issues discussed by agricultural economists nowadays. As guest editors, we believe that we have achieved our goals concerning the theme and quality of this number of the Review, thanks also to an accurate work carried out by the referees and the same Authors. Thanks to all scholars, to the Chief Editor and the Editorial Board, as well as to the Scientific Committee of the 52nd SIDEA Conference that appointed us.

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